



# The Girl Who Would Not Marry



63 8 7

## Chapter 1 by Ronja Frigard

Stormboard is the largest of many families in the realm, and is ruled over by Rickard Stormboard, a lord with an iron fist and an even harder heart. Except for his daughter, the twenty-year old Sygil Stormboard. Sygil is stubborn as a mule, and although a stunner, with the typical northern blue eyes and thick golden hair, she turns down countless marriage proposals. If it were any of his other daughters, Rickard would simply order them to marry the richest suitor, but Sygil is more and more like her father each day, winning horse races and sparring matches by the dozen. Will he finally be forced to marry her off when the King's son, Braken, demands her as a wife while visiting their home, or will she make them all bow down to her whims.

## Chapter 2 by Ronja Frigard



The earth was pounding beneath her, her stallion's inky black flanks heavy with sweat as she raced through the forest, leaving her competitors behind. She wore tight black leather leggings and a chainmail top, her head adorned by a black and silver helmet. She saw the trees give away as she raced out of the forest, the crowd going wild as her competitors followed her a few seconds later. She pushed the panting horse with her knees, putting on an extra burst of speed

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and they were the only ones brave enough to race her and risk her father's fury if he found out. They grinned at her, each removing their own helmets to be met with even louder screams from the local women who came out to watch the races.

"Looks like you two better go get some, before they climb the fences," Sygil said jokingly, wiggling her eyebrows.

They both blushed and laughed as she dismounted, following her back to the stables to rub down their horses. Cevilse's horse was a hot blood mare with a blood-colored flank, and Kabar had a dappled brown and white charger.

Once the horses had been tended to and their riders had rinsed off their faces and taken drinks from the well near the barn, they remounted and made some casual banter while trotting their horses back to the crowd. The fans had dispersed and were now seated at tables in front of booths and stands that had been set up that day.

"Where's your father, Syg?" Asked Kabar casually, grabbing a tankard of beer from the bartender of a stand they passed.

"Meeting some dignitary from the king, I'm guessing, since their ship arrived in the bay last night. I left before dawn."

"That would be correct, young lady," said a new voice from behind them. Sygil wheeled around her horse and found herself face to face with her father, mounted on his own snow-white charger.

"Dad." She smiled awkwardly, giving her best, 'I'm sorry don't yell' face before dismounting. His eyes swept over her disapprovingly, taking in her chain mail and the helmet that was tied to the saddle bags of her horse. She shuffled her black booted feet but didn't look down or break eye-contact, staring her father down.

"Sygil," he finally said with a sigh, "I'd like you to meet crown prince Braken of Gardenon. Braken, this is my daughter, Sygil."

A man Sygil had never met before rode forward, dismounting and giving a slight bow before gently taking her hand and kissing her knuckles."Prince Braken, delighted to make your acquaintance, my lady Stormboard."

"My mother is Lady Stormboard. Call me Sygil, your grace." she said is stiffly and in a bored tone,

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Sygil nodded, visibly annoyed by her father's orders, but said nothing. She remounted and waited for Braken to do the same, though it took him a moment to get the message. A blush colored his face and she sighed, pushing her blond curls, which had come out of their braids, back and out of her face. She lead them away, taking a rather brisk pace to deter speaking between her and the prince.

"So, do you come out to watch the races often, my l- Sygil?" he tried for conversation.

She kept her eyes forward, scoping out the road before them, before speaking. "There is little time for watching races when you are competing in them."

"Oh," he looked surprised, "You race? I thought only me-" he was cut off by a sharp look from Kabar, who shook his head warningly. "What?" he whispered, uneasily.

"I wouldn't finish that sentence if I were you, not if you value your manhood," he advised, eyes glued on the back of Sygil's chainmail.

Straightening, he smiled confusedly, but changed the topic. "So, you race? How often?"

Once more she didn't speak for a moment, considering her reply, before she said, "I had just finished one when you and my lord father approached us, actually. That is where we're going right now, to collect my money."

"If you are in need of money, my lady, I could gladly, "

"What did I say about that title. No one knows me here, It's just Sygil. And, yes. I race often."

"Do you win?"

She turned to look at him, her horse pulling at the reins, and she pinned him with a stare.

"Always." And with that she led him over to an alleyway, where a man was waiting with a purse of gold.

She rode up, taking the purse, exchanged a few words with the man, nodded, and rode back to the three boys.

"Alright, let's go give you a tour of this place."

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